H & H Burn Pit

Farrington, Hanover County, Virginia
Superfund Program Site Fact Sheet

Type of Facility: Former Disposal Pit for Dried Printing Inks, Solvents, and Resins

Contaminants: Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), Benzene, Toluene, Beryllium, Manganese, Lead, MEK, and Acetone

Funding: Enforcement Financed

Site Description and History

The H & H Burn Pit site is on Route 33 in Hanover County, Virginia, and was operated by H & H, Incorporated. Haskell Chemical Company used the one-acre site between 1960 and 1976 for the disposal of dried printing inks, solvents, and resins. These materials were transported to the site in drums, emptied into shallow, unlined pits, and burned. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sampling in 1984 indicated that PCBs were being discharged off site through surface drainage. The site was included on the National Priorities List on March 31, 1989.

In 1982 in response to a State Order, H & H, Incorporated and the Haskell Chemical Company removed contaminated soil, installed monitoring wells, and took measures to control erosion and sedimentation.

In May 1992, EPA issued Mr. T. Frank Flippo, current owner of the site, a Unilateral Order. The Order allowed EPA contractors, Ecology and Environment, Incorporated, to conduct more sampling to complete the Remedial Investigation Report. The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Report was completed in December 1993. The Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) was submitted in January 1994.

A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in June 1995. The remedy called for excavation, treatment and off-site disposal of contaminated soil and sediment, and the extraction, treatment and discharge of contaminated ground water.

A Consent Decree and an Administrative Order by Consent were signed on September 30, 1996, by the Reynolds Metals Company and the Westvaco Corporation to conduct the remedial design and remedial action. At that point, the site changed from fund-financed lead (EPA) to enforcement-financed lead (Responsible Party). J.W. Fergusson & Sons, Inc. was added as a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) in 1998.

In late 1996 the site was split into two operable units or OUs. OU-1 covered soil and sediment removal and OU-2 dealt with ground water contamination. In late 1996 and early 1997, the PRPs carried out a remedial investigation for a waste removal action. Also, Hatcher-Sayre, Inc. was hired to put together the remedial design work plan.

The Final Remedial Design Work Plan was completed in September 1997. This plan called for additional sampling, surveys, pilot tests, and reports. The first of these, the Source Removal Work Plan, was completed in September 1997 and the Ground Water and Soil Sampling Report was completed in January 1998.

The first phase of the OU-1 soil and sediment remedial action, source (soil) excavation and disposal from the unsaturated zone was completed in September 1998. Sediment sampling in the surface water channel was conducted in October 1998. This sediment removal was completed in May 1999.

In October through December of 1998, Hatcher-Sayre conducted aquifer testing and an air sparging/high vacuum extraction pilot study in preparation for treatment of ground water (OU-2). The results of these tests were presented in the Expedited Remediation Program and High Vacuum Extraction (HVE) Pilot Study Report completed in February 1999.

H & H Burn Pit – Remediation Activities
Photo by EPA

An Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) was signed in September 1999 to change the ground water remediation to HVE. The remedial design was completed in September 1999, and the remediation construction completion of the HVE treatment system occurred in May 2000.

Approximately 600 people live within a mile of the site. The nearest residence and the nearest well are about 1,000 feet from the site. About 2,400 people draw drinking water from private wells, within three miles of the site. Surface waters within three miles downstream of the site are used for fishing.

Current Site Status

The OU-1 remediation is complete. The OU-2 HVE system will continue to operate as long as the ground water exceeds cleanup levels.

In January 2001, acetone and 2-butanone, also known as methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), started being detected in the influent to the treatment system in higher levels than anticipated. These compounds are not cost-effectively treated by the current treatment system. In fall 2001 the PRPs conducted a field investigation to determine the horizontal and vertical extent of acetone and MEK in ground water, and found that these compounds remain in the former burn pit area. In December 2002 the PRPs placed additional deeper wells to further assess the extent and concentrations of these contaminants.

Community Relations and Concerns

A workshop was held on March 26, 1991, to update citizens on the Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Work Plan. A Technical Assistance Grant workshop was held June 3, 1991. The revised Community Relations Plan for the EPA contractor, Ecology and Environment, Inc issued the RI/FS in January 1992.

After completion of the RI/FS, EPA had a public comment period and held a public meeting in January 1994, to solicit PRAP comments from the public. EPA held a public meeting on November 25, 1997, to explain the Remedial Action to the local residents. A Remedial Action Construction Completion public event was held on October 26, 2000.

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